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BACKGROUND PAPER
CAMP SECURITY: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

An estimated 360,000 Rwandans are displaced in southwest Rwanda, primarily in the Gikongoro prefecture. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) have congregated in 30 some camps and are receiving assistance from the UN and NGO relief community. The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) has successfully closed or dispersed four camps over the past three months, forcing IDPs to flee to camps further south. A small number of IDPs have been killed during these closures, leading the international community to call for an end to the RPA's activities, and to propose an alternate plan, Operation Retour.

Operation Retour, a U.N.-led plan to assist IDPs to return home, was launched on December 29. To date, the operation is proceeding as planned. As of January 6, 6,443 IDPs in the Cyanika and Ndago camps had been registered and transported to their home communes where NGOs were prepared to provide assistance. An unknown number of IDPs left the camps on their own. Cyanika and Ndago camps are scheduled to close by January 13.

Incidents of violence between the RPA and IDPs continue. The worst case broke out this past weekend when a local commander ordered an RPA unit into Busanze camp (near the Burundi border). It is unclear how the conflict started, but the end result was 16 IDPs killed and 36 wounded. Most were shot, but some bayoneted, by the RPA. This incident is believed to be a rogue operation, not sanctioned by GOR or RPA leadership. The local commander and three RPA officers have been arrested.

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TALKING POINTS
CAMP SECURITY: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

- * The USG is pleased that Operation Retour has been successful to date.
- * We appreciate the efforts of donor governments, the UN, and NGOs in assisting IDPs to return home.
- * We will continue to call on the RPA to ensure that returning IDPs are provided a safe return and are allowed to resume their lives with security and dignity.
- * We will also encourage the RPA to cooperate with Operation Retour and not to close camps unilaterally.

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